



EMPLOYABILITY AND SOCIAL PARTNERSHIPS DIVISION

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Status of Day Care in Canada 1995 and 1996

A Review
of the Major Findings
of the National Day Care Study
1995 and 1996



Preface

Status of Day Care in Canada 1995 and 1996 is intended to present a general overview of day care services in Canada.

This publication was developed, with the co-operation of provincial authorities, by the Employability and Social Partnerships Division, Department of Human Resources Development.

If you have any comments on *Status of Day Care in Canada 1995 and 1996*, please contact the Employability and Social Partnerships Division, Department of Human Resources Development, Hull, Quebec, K1A 0J9, (819) 997-1170.

Également disponible en français sous le titre
Situation de la garde de jour au Canada 1995 et 1996.

Published by authority of the
Minister of Human Resources Development

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Cat. H74-14/1996E
ISBN 0-662-26143-7

SDCC-001-09-97E



Major Findings – 1995

Increase in Day Care Spaces

Since 1971, the first year the federal government gathered data on national day care, there has been significant growth in the number of day care spaces. In 1971 there were 17 391 spaces. In 1995, there were 412 743 spaces. This represents more than a twenty-fold increase.

In the years since 1971 there has been growth at a rate of 10% to 16%, with only a few exceptions until 1990 when the rate dropped to 7.56%. This downward trend in growth continued in the 90s, with the lowest rate of growth since 1978 occurring in 1991 at 3.89%. The rate of growth in 1992, although still low, climbed to 5.28%. In 1993 the rate slowed again to 3.46% while in 1994 the rate of growth increased to 8.67%. In 1995 the rate of growth was reduced to 4.6%.

The number of full-time day care spaces in Canada in 1995 was 412 743. This is an increase of 18 455.

Centre spaces increased by 14 637.

Family day care spaces increased by 3 818.

Table 1 indicates the growth of centre and family day care spaces by year.

The overall rate of growth in 1995 was 4.68% compared to 8.67% in 1994.

The rate of growth for family day care over 1994 was 6.15%.

The rate of growth of day care centres over 1994 was 2.71%

Age Groups Served by Day Care Programs

As indicated in Table 2, the availability of day care services differs according to the age of the child. It is important to note that some provinces/territories are not able to provide detailed breakdowns by age; in such cases, estimates have been provided.

As in the past, children between the ages of three and six years are the largest group using day care centre spaces. There were 195 523 spaces available to this age group, accounting for 56.38% of the total day care centre spaces.

Only 57 955 or 16.72% of centre spaces are used by children under three years; this is a slight decrease in the proportion of spaces used by the infants and toddlers. At the same time, the number of infant spaces declined from 26 900 in 1994 to 24 470 in 1995. In contrast, it is estimated that the family day care program had spaces for 21 658 children under three years, constituting 32.85% of the total family day care spaces. School-age day care spaces accounted for 109 848 and constitute 26.61% of all day care spaces in 1995.

Sponsorship of Day Care Centres

The proportion of all day care spaces under commercial auspice continued to decline in 1995. While in 1968, 75% of all day care spaces were under commercial auspice, in 1995, only 28.63% of all day care centre spaces were operated by commercial operators. The non-profit sector constituted 71.37% of the total centre spaces.

The number of non-profit day care centre spaces increased by 12 923, or 5.51% over 1994 while the commercial centre spaces increased by 1 714, or 1.76%.

Tables 3 and 4 show the distribution and relative growth of day care spaces under different types of sponsorship.

Day Care Spaces by Province and Territory

Table 5 shows full-time centre spaces and family day care spaces by province and territory. Table 6 provides comparison by auspice.

Full-time Day Care Spaces in Canada in Relation to the Number of Day Care Age Children of Parents in the Labour Market

The mandate for *Status of Day Care in Canada* has been to show the year-by-year growth patterns in day care.

However, there has always been some interest in relating these findings to the degree of unmet need. The data provided by the provinces does not lend itself directly to this type of analysis. To address this question, the early *Status of Day Care in Canada* reports compared the number of full-time day care spaces to the number of children of mothers who were in the labour force. The problem with this approach is that many mothers work part-time and may not require a full-time day care space. This creates an exaggerated impression of the degree of unmet need.

On the other hand, if only the data on children of two parents who work full-time are considered, actual need may be underestimated, in that a parent working 20 hours a week would not likely find a part-time day care space to match the hours needed for care.

Consequently, *Status of Day Care in Canada* now uses a format which presents four separate compilations estimating the percentage of children who can be served by existing day care spaces. The four separate compilations are for children 0-17 months; children between 18 months and 35 months; children age 3 to 5 inclusive and children between 6 and 12 years.

This approach compares only the number of full-time day care spaces to the number of children by various ages where the parents are involved in one of the four categories. It should not be construed to relate to the number of children whose parents would choose a regulated day care setting if it were made available.

Tables 7, 8, 9 and 10 relate the four categories and parental work situations to the percentage of full-time day care spaces available. Tables 7 and 8 indicate a slight decline in the number of children under three with parents who are working and/or studying. In contrast, the number of children between 6 and 13 years with parents studying or working generally

increased.

The existing evidence of parental preference is sketchy at best, but it is reasonable to assume that approximately 50% of those not using regulated care would do so if provided the opportunity. However, a number of variables need to be researched before definitive statements can be made.

Another consideration is the impact of full-time kindergarten and part-time junior kindergarten in the school system on the demand for day care.

Table 2 shows that the percentage of spaces available for five-year-olds and, to a lesser extent, for four-year-olds, is significantly lower than for three-year-olds. Some provinces and territories have difficulty reporting the actual number of children in their centres by age and some of the figures in this table are best estimates. The age breakdown is much less reliable than are the data on the number of spaces available by auspice.

Table 1 - Distribution of Centre Spaces, Family Day Care Spaces and Day Care Centres by Year

	31 Mar 1971	31 Mar 1985	31 Mar 1993	31 Mar 1994	31 Mar 1995	No. %	Increase over 1994
Centre Spaces	16 791	169 751	308 424	332 173	346 810	14 637	4.41
Family Day Care Spaces	600	22 623	54 394	62 115	65 933	3 818	6.15
Total Spaces	17 391	192 374	362 818	394 288	412 743	18 455	4.68
Day Care Centres	682	4 685	8 196	8 847	9 087	240	2.71

Table 2 - Spaces in Day Care Centres and Family Day Care Homes by Age of Children Served (1995)

Ages*	Day Care Centres		Family Day Care Homes	
	No.	%	No.	%
0-17 mos.	24 470	7.06	10 057	15.25
18-35 mos.	33 485	9.66	11 601	17.60
3 years	108 937	31.41	8 029	12.18
4 years	51 283	14.79	8 029	12.18
5 years	35 303	10.18	11 700	17.75
6-10 years	90 369	26.06	15 914	24.14
10-12 years	2 963	0.85	602	0.91
TOTAL	346 810	100.00	65 933	100.00

*Some provinces/territories are not able to provide breakdowns by age, and in such cases, estimates have been provided.

Table 3 - Sponsorship of Centre Spaces 1979, 1985 and 1995

Type of Sponsorship	1979		1985		1995	
	Spaces	% of Spaces	Spaces	% of Spaces	Spaces	% of Spaces
Non-Profit	42 534	50.59	106 131	62.52	247 522	71.37
Commercial	41 549	49.41	63 631	37.48	99 288	28.63
Total	84 083	100.00	169 762	100.00	346 810	100.00

Table 4 - Sponsorship of Centre Spaces 1994 and 1995

Type of Sponsorship	1994		1995		Increase	
	Spaces		Spaces		No.	%
Non-Profit	234 599		247 522		12 923	5.51
Commercial	97 574		99 288		1 714	1.76
Total	332 173		346 810		14 637	4.41

Table 5 - Interprovincial Comparison of Day Care Spaces

Provinces/ Territories	Centre Spaces	Family Day Care Spaces	Centres
Newfoundland	2 570	0	84
Prince Edward Island	3 888	4	125
Nova Scotia	7 061	131	181
New Brunswick	7 952	114	233
Quebec*	93 581	17 871	1 837
Ontario	128 955	18 898	3 149
Manitoba	11 572	3 111	308
Saskatchewan	4 653	2 613	126
Alberta**	55 991	7 817	1 521
British Columbia	28 756	14 972	1 462
Northwest Territories	1 106	96	42
Yukon	725	306	19
National Totals	346 810	65 933	9 087

* This includes spaces operated by school boards for kindergarten and school-age children.

** This includes school-age spaces which are not regulated by the province but may be regulated by the municipality.

Table 6 - Interprovincial Comparison of Day Care Centre Spaces By Auspice

Prov/Terr.	Non-Profit	Commercial	Total
Newfoundland	609	1 961	2 570
P.E.I.	2 636	1 252	3 888
Nova Scotia	4 158	2 903	7 061
New Brunswick	4 374	3 578	7 952
Quebec	76 314	17 267	93 581
Ontario	103 373	25 582	128 955
Manitoba	10 363	1 209	11 572
Saskatchewan	4 556	97	4 653
Alberta	21 797	34 194	55 991
B.C.	17 840	10 916	28 756
NWT	983	123	1 106
Yukon	519	206	725
National Totals	247 522	99 288	346 810

Table 7 - Infant Day Care - Children 0-17 Months

Category of Parent	Number of Children	% of Children Served
Mothers in labour force	330 018	10
Full-time working parents (1)	185 960	19
Full-time working parents plus students (2)	196 863	18
Full-time working parents plus students, plus parents working 20 to 29 hours a week (3)	237 988	15

As of March 1995, there were 34 527 full-time day care spaces for children 0-17 months of age. As can be seen from the above four categories, the percentage of children these spaces can serve differs according to which group of parents are included in the compilation.

Table 8 - Children between the Ages of 18-36 Months (inclusive)

Category of Parent	Number of Children	% of Children Served
Mothers in labour force	342 806	13
Full-time working parents (1)	180 884	25
Full-time working parents plus students (2)	201 462	22
Full-time working parents plus students, plus parents working 20-29 hours a week (3)	253 673	18

As of March 1995, there were 45 086 full-time day care spaces for children between the ages of 18 months and 36 months.

Table 9- Children between the Ages of 3 And 6 Years

Category of Parent	Number of Children	% of Children Served
Mothers in labour force	716 749	31
Full-time working parents (1)	360 010	62
Full-time working parents (2) plus students	389 004	57
Full-time working parents plus students, plus parents working 20-29 hours a week (3)	509 002	44

As of March 1995, there were 223 281 day care spaces for children between the ages of 3 and 6 years.

Table 10- Children between the Ages of 6 and 10 Years

Category of Parent	Number of Children	% of Children Served
Mothers in labour force	1 299 072	8
Full-time working parents (1)	670 102	16
Full-time working parents (2) plus students	719 769	15
Full-time working parents plus students, plus parents working 20-29 hours a week (3)	910 707	12

As of March 1995, there were 106 283 day care spaces for children between the ages of 6 and 10 years old.

Table 11 - Children between the Ages of 6 and 13 Years

Category of Parent	Number of Children	% of Children Served
Mothers in labour force	1 580 025	7
Full-time working parents (1)	1 001 107	11
Full-time working parents (2) plus students	1 071 145	10
Full-time working parents plus students, plus parents working 20-29 hours a week (3)	1 341 800	8

As of March 1995, there were 109 848 day care spaces for school-age children.

Notes

1. This category includes lone parents working full time, and includes two-parent families in which both parents work full time.
2. This category includes full-time working parents, lone parents who are full-time students, two-parent families in which one parent works full time and the other is a full-time student and two-parent families in which both parents are full-time students.
3. This category includes full-time working parents, student-parents, lone parents who work 20 to 29 hours a week, two-parent families in which one parent works full time and the other 20 to 29 hours per week, two-parent families in which both parents work 20 to 29 hours a week and two-parent families in which one parent works 20 to 29 hours a week and the other is a full-time student.



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Major Findings – 1996

Increase in Day Care Spaces

Since 1971, the first year the federal government gathered data on national day care, there has been significant growth in the number of day care spaces. In 1971 there were 17 391 spaces. In 1996, there were 435 478 spaces. This represents more than a twenty-five-fold increase.

In the years since 1971 there has been growth at a rate of 10% to 16%, with only a few exceptions until 1990 when the rate dropped to 7.56%. This downward trend in growth continued in the 90s, with the lowest rate of growth since 1978 occurring in 1991 at 3.89%. The rate of growth in 1992, although still low, climbed to 5.28%. In 1993 the rate slowed again to 3.46% while in 1994 the rate of growth increased to 8.67%. In 1995 the rate of growth was reduced to 4.6%, and in 1996 the rate of growth rose slightly to 5.5%.

The number of full-time day care spaces in Canada in 1996 was 435 478. This is an increase of 22 735.

Centre spaces increased by 19 641.

Family day care spaces increased by 3 094.

Table 1 indicates the growth of centre and family day care spaces by year.

The overall rate of growth in 1996 was 5.5% compared to 4.68% in 1995.

The rate of growth for family day care over 1995 was 4.69%.

The rate of growth of day care centres over 1995 was 5%.

Age Groups Served by Day Care Programs

As indicated in Table 2, the availability of day care services differs according to the age of the child. It is important to note that some provinces/territories are not able to provide detailed breakdowns by age; in such cases, estimates have been provided.

As in the past, children between the ages of three and six years are the largest group using day care centre spaces. There were 201 903 spaces available to this age group, accounting for 55.09% of the total day care centre spaces.

Only 61 483 or 16.77% of centre spaces are used by children under three years; this is a similar proportion of spaces used by the infants and toddlers as in 1995. While the number of infant spaces increased slightly from 24 470 in 1995 to 25 668 in 1996, it remained lower than the number of infant spaces in 1994 which was 26 900. In contrast, it is estimated that the family day care program had spaces for 23 124 children under three years, constituting 33.49% of the total family day care spaces. School-age day care spaces accounted for 120 803 and constituted 27.74% of all day care spaces in 1996.

Sponsorship of Day Care Centres

The proportion of all day care spaces under commercial auspice continued to decline in 1996. While in 1968, 75% of all day care spaces were under commercial auspice, in 1996, only 27.38% of all day care centre spaces were operated by commercial operators. The non-profit sector constituted 72.62% of the total centre spaces.

The number of non-profit day care centre spaces increased by 18 580 or 7.5% over 1995 while the commercial centres spaces increased by 1 016 or 1.06%.

Tables 3 and 4 show the distribution and relative growth of day care spaces under different types of sponsorship.

Day Care Spaces by Province and Territory

Table 5 shows full-time centre spaces and family day care spaces by province and territory. Table 6 provides comparison by auspice.

Full-time Day Care Spaces in Canada in Relation to the Number of Day Care Age Children of Parents in the Labour Market

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On the other hand, if only the data on children of two parents who work full-time are considered, actual need may be under-estimated, in that a parent working 20 hours a week would not likely find a part-time day care space to match the hours needed for care.

Consequently, *Status of Day Care in Canada* now uses a format which presents four separate compilations estimating the percentage of children who can be served by existing day care spaces. The four separate compilations are for children 0-17 months; children between 18 months and 35 months; children age 3 to 5 inclusive and children between 6 and 12 years.

This approach compares only the number of full-time day care spaces to the number of children by various ages where the parents are involved in one of the four categories. It should not be construed to relate to the number of children whose parents would choose a regulated day care setting if it were made available.

Tables 7, 8, 9 and 10 relate the four categories and parental work situations to the percentage of full-time day care spaces available. Tables 7 and 8 indicate a slight decline in the number of children under three with parents who are working and/or studying. In contrast, the number of children between 6 and 13 years with parents studying or working generally increased.

The existing evidence of parental preference is sketchy at best, but it is reasonable to assume that approximately 50% of those not using regulated care would do so if provided the opportunity. However, a number of variables need to be researched before definitive statements can be made.

Another consideration is the impact of full-time kindergarten and part-time junior kindergarten in the school system on the demand for day care.

Table 2 shows that the percentage of spaces available for five-year-olds and, to a lesser extent, for four-year-olds, is significantly lower than for three-year-olds. Some provinces and territories have difficulty reporting the actual number of children in their centres by age and some of the figures in this table are best estimates. The age breakdown is much less reliable than are the data on the number of spaces available by auspice.

Table 1 - Distribution of Centre Spaces, Family Day Care Spaces and Day Care Centres by Year

Number of spaces	31 Mar 1971	31 Mar 1985	31 Mar 1994	31 Mar 1995	31 Mar 1996	Increase over 1995 No. %
Centre Spaces	16 791	169 751	332 173	346 810	366 451	19 641 5.67
Family Day Care Spaces	600	22 623	62 115	65 933	69 027	3 094 4.69
Total Spaces	17 391	192 374	39 4288	412 743	435 478	22 735 5.5
Day Care Centres	682	4 685	8 847	9 087	9 541	454 5.0

Table 2 - Spaces in Day Care Centres and Family Day Care Homes by Age of Children Served (1996)

Ages*	Day Care Centres		Family Day Care Homes	
	No.	%	No.	%
0-17 mos.	25 668	7.00	11 113	16.10
18-35 mos.	35 815	9.77	12 011	17.40
3 years	110 730	30.22	9 388	13.60
4 years	53 693	14.65	9 457	13.70
5 years	37 480	10.23	9 319	13.50
6-10 years	99 170	27.06	16 994	24.62
10-12 years	3 894	1.06	745	1.08
TOTALS	366 451	100.00	69 027	100.00

*Some provinces/territories are not able to provide breakdowns by age, and in such cases, estimates have been provided.

Table 3 - Sponsorship of Centre Spaces 1979, 1985 and 1996

Type of Sponsorship	1979		1985		1996	
	Spaces	% of Spaces	Spaces	% of Spaces	Spaces	% of Spaces
Non-Profit	42 534	50.59	106 131	62.52	266 102	72.62
Commercial	41 549	49.41	63 631	37.48	100 349	27.38
Total	84 083	100.00	169 762	100.00	366 451	100.00

Table 4 - Sponsorship of Centre Spaces 1995 and 1996

Type of Sponsorship	1995		1996		Increase
	Spaces	Spaces	No.	%	
Non-Profit	247 522	266 102	18 580	7.5	
Commercial	99 288	100 349	1 061	1.06	
Total	346 810	366 451	19 641	5.66	

Table 5 - Interprovincial Comparison of Day Care Spaces

Provinces/ Territories	Centre Spaces	Family Day Care Spaces	Centres
Newfoundland	2 558	0	82
Prince Edward Island	3 884	3	122
Nova Scotia	7 381	131	193
New Brunswick	8 102	120	239
Quebec*	103 186	19 479	1 948
Ontario	135 223	19 059	3 176
Manitoba	11 827	3 272	302
Saskatchewan	4 823	2 725	135
Alberta**	55 621	6 948	1 579
British Columbia	31 902	16 808	1 614
Northwest Territories	1 112	128	39
Yukon	832	354	22
National Totals	366 451	69 027	9 451

* This includes spaces operated by school boards for kindergarten and school-age children.

** This includes school-age spaces which are not regulated by the province but may be regulated by the municipality.

Table 6 - Interprovincial Comparison of Day Care Centre Spaces By Auspice

Prov./Terr.	Non-Profit	Commercial	Total
Newfoundland	579	1 979	2 558
Prince Edward Island	2 634	1 250	3 884
Nova Scotia	4 202	3 179	7 381
New Brunswick	4 657	3 445	8 102
Quebec	83 344	19 842	103 186
Ontario	111 277	23 946	135 223
Manitoba	10 551	1 276	11 827
Saskatchewan	4 726	97	4 823
Alberta	22 381	33 240	55 621
British Columbia	20 145	11 757	31 902
Northwest Territories	989	123	1 112
Yukon	617	215	832
National Totals	266 102	100 349	366 451

Table 7 - Infant Day Care - Children 0-17 Months

Category of Parent	Number of Children	% of Children Served
Mothers in labour force	327 005	11
Full-time working parents (1)	184 348	20
Full-time working parents plus students (2)	195 118	19
Full-time working parents plus students, plus parents working 20-29 hours a week (3)	235 785	16

As of March 1996, there were 36 781 full-time day care spaces for children 0-17 months of age. As can be seen from the above four compilations, the percentage of children these spaces can serve differs according to which groups of parents are included in the compilation.

Table 8 - Children between the Ages of 18-36 Months (inclusive)

Category of Parent	Number of Children	% of Children Served
Mothers in labour force	338 321	14
Full-time working parents (1)	178 544	27
Full-time working parents plus students (2)	198 832	24
Full-time working parents plus students, plus parents working 20-29 hours a week (3)	250 312	19

As of March 1996, there were 47 826 full-time day care spaces for children between the ages of 18 months and 36 months.

Table 9- Children between the Ages of 3 And 6 Years

Category of Parent	Number of Children	% of Children Served
Mothers in labour force	715 199	32
Full-time working parents (1)	359 288	64
Full-time working parents plus students (2)	393 140	59
Full-time working parents plus students, plus parents working 20-29 hours a week (3)	508 001	45

As of March 1996, there were 230 067 day care spaces for children between the ages of 3 and 6 years.

Table 10- Children between the Ages of 6 and 10 Years

Category of Parent	Number of Children	% of Children Served
Mothers in labour force	1 310 710	9
Full-time working parents (1)	676 149	17
Full-time working parents plus students (2)	726 345	16
Full-time working parents plus students, plus parents working 20-29 hours a week (3)	918 979	13

As of March 1996, there were 116 164 day care spaces for children between the ages of 6 and 10 years.

Table 11 - Children between the Ages of 6 and 13 Years

Category of Parent	Number of Children	% of Children Served
Mothers in labour force	1 595 450	8
Full-time working parents (1)	1 011 706	12
Full-time working parents plus students (2)	1 082 547	11
Full-time working parents plus students, plus parents working 20-29 hours a week (3)	1 355 989	9

As of March 1996, there were 120 803 day care spaces for school-age children.

Notes

1. This category includes lone parents working full time and includes two-parent families in which both parents work full time.
2. This category includes full-time working parents, lone parents who are full-time students, two-parent families in which one parent works full time and the other is a full-time student and two-parent families in which both parents are full-time students.
3. This category includes full-time working parents, student parents, lone parents who work 20 to 29 hours a week, two-parent families in which one parent works full time and the other 20 to 29 hours a week, two-parent families in which both parents work 20 to 29 hours a week and two-parent families in which one parent works 20 to 29 hours a week and the other is a full-time student.

Glossary

Auspice – Sponsorship and/or the responsibility for the day care program, i.e. non-profit community board or commercial operator.

Centre care – Care given to groups of children in a licensed day care centre.

Commercial centre – A licensed day care centre that is set up as a proprietary operation. The term describes larger franchise operations, as well as the small, individually owned centres.

Community board centre – A licensed day care centre that is established as a non-profit organization and is governed by a community board of directors.

Day care facility – For the purposes of this report, a licensed or provincially approved centre or private home providing care for children outside of their own home for eight to ten hours a day.

Family day care – A program involving the selection and supervision by a government or authorized private agency of private families who give care to children during the day.

Infant day care – Care provided by a day care centre or a family day care home for children under the age of two.

Latch-key child – School-age child of working parents who carries house keys to gain entrance to home after school and before parents return from work.

Non-profit day care – For the purposes of this report, includes both community board centres and co-operative day care programs.

Pre-school day care – Care provided by a day care centre or a family day care home for children aged two to six.

Private or casual day care arrangements – Arrangements between the parent and the provider, such as those involving a private baby-sitter, which are not under the supervision of a licensing authority or day care agency.

Public day care – A licensed day care centre owned and operated by a municipal or provincial government.

School-age day care – Supervision of young school-age children before school begins, during the noon hour, after class, and on days when school is not in session.

